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U. S. Department of Agriculture

Housekeepers' Chat

Monday, August 11, 1930

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "Cold Meat in Good Company." Garnishes to serve with meats, and menu from Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Bulletins available: "Lamb as You Like It,"

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Polly is going to be married this month. All her school and college friends are giving showers for her, and luncheon parties, and teas and every other kind of entertainment you could think of. I'm afraid, if she is entertained too much, Polly will be all tired out before the great day comes. But so far she seems to be enjoying herself hugely, and accumulating so many things in her hope chest that she can start house-keeping much better equipped than her mother was.

I like showers -- the idea of them, I mean. Having one's friends put into the new home so many of the little everyday things that one sees and uses all the time. A bride who has had a kitchen shower is bound to say, every time she picks up her egg-beater, "Elizabeth gave me that," unless it was such a large shower that she has to stop and think, "Now who in the world was it gave me the spatula?"

Polly has been given a kitchen shower, and a linen shower, and a silk stocking shower. Even Betty Lou wants to have a shower for Polly. It's to be a handkerchief shower, because girls of Betty Lou's age don't have much pocket money. You have to think of that when you plan a shower, of course -- how much other people would want to spend. I'm going to help Betty Lou with her luncheon menu-- it's to be a luncheon and shower, and Betty Lou will get everything ready without help, for eight girls, including herself.

Perhaps you would be interested in a new kind of shower to be given Polly by still another friend. A closet shower. At least, it's new to me. The guests are to bring something to make a closet more convenient -- shoe trees or racks, hat stand, shoe bags, laundry bags, clothes hangers, nested boxes, stocking boxes, dress bags, and so on. You'd be surprised how many convenient and easily made things there are to help keep a closet in order. Some of them are made of cretonne or chintz, some of gay figured oilcloth. Many of the useful boxes for storing things in small spaces are covered with wallpaper and varnished with clear shellac.

Betty Lou has planned a very simple hot weather luncheon. Everything, practically, is cold, except the biscuits, though of course, the potato chips are heated up to make them crisp.

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Here is the whole menu: Cold Lamb with Pineapple and Cucumber Gelatin Salad; Potato Chips or Shoestring Potatoes; Hot Rolls or Biscuits; Iced Drink; Chocolate Cake a la Mode.

The iced drink Betty Lou will serve is to be grape juice or lemonade, but if I were using this menu for a group of grown-ups, I think I'd have iced tea or iced coffee. To make chocolate cake a la mode you take chocolate cake, split it open, put in a layer of vanilla ice cream, put back the top, sandwich fashion, and add another spoonful of ice cream on top. Betty Lou made her loaf of chocolate cake the day before, so this was a very easy dessert to arrange on the day of the party.

On the back cover of the lamb leaflet you will find a picture of the cold meat platter as Betty Lou will serve it. The mint-flavored pineapple and cucumber gelatin salad is in the center, with the cold sliced meat neatly arranged around it.

As the recipe for this salad is not in the leaflet, I will read it to you; Eleven ingredients. Ready?

2 tablespoons gelatin	1/2 cup diced cucumber
1/2 cup cold water	2 tablespoons pineapple juice
1 -1/2 cups boiling water	4 tablespoons lemon juice
5 tablespoons sugar	5 drops oil of peppermint, and
1/2 cup crushed pineapple, drained.	Green coloring matter
1/2 teaspoon salt	

Eleven ingredients, for Mint-Flavored Cucumber and Pineapple Gelatin Salad: (Repeat).

Soak the gelatin in the cold water for 5 minutes. Add to the boiling water with the sugar and salt, and stir until all are dissolved. Cool and add the crushed pineapple, diced cucumber, pineapple and lemon juice, oil of peppermint, and enough coloring matter to make the mixture pale green. Set the container in ice water, and stir until the gelatin mixture begins to congeal. Rinse a mold with cold water, coat it lightly with some of the clear gelatin, and place thin slices of cucumber in the bottom and sides. Then fill the mold with the rest of the gelatin mixture and let stand in a cold place until firm. Or if preferred, mold in cups for individual servings. Serve with a tart salad dressing on a bed of lettuce.

There -- doesn't that sound appetizing? I'm sure some of you will be trying it right away. I hope you'll tell me how you like it. The dish looks so pretty and tasty when it comes to the table, with the green color of the mint gelatin, and the pale green slices of cucumber, and the pale yellow pineapple.

And don't forget the garnish of mint leaves, which are especially appropriate in this case.

I once knew a woman who often got words a little bit wrong -- a modern Mrs. Malaprop. She used to say, "All dishes should be garnished when they go to the table." She had the right idea, even if she had the wrong word.

Use only enough of any garnish to give a touch of color, unless, as in the case of the mint and cucumber gelatin, it is part of the main dish. Even parsley, the housewife's standby, can be overdone. Haven't you seen roasts come on the table so bedecked with wreaths of parsley you couldn't tell just what cut of meat was being served?

Wouldn't you like to jot down some of the garnishes I have used to vary the appearance of my meals? I'll read them slowly:

Sprigs of parsley, cress, mint, celery tops, or small leaves of lettuce; narrow rings of green pepper or pimiento, thin slices of tomato, cucumber, or pickles; olives; tiny gherkins; sliced beets or carrots cut in fancy shapes; sliced or sections of hard-cooked eggs; rings of apple, cooked or uncooked.

Potato salad and cold cooked ham are a favorite summer combination, each garnishing the other, as it were. And, in a similar way, alternate slices of ham and chicken, veal, or lamb, are attractive on a platter because the two colors contrast with each other.

I'd better repeat the luncheon menu: Cold Lamb with Pineapple and Cucumber Gelatin Salad; Potato Chips or shoestring Potatoes; Hot Rolls or Biscuits; Iced Tea, Coffee, or a Fruit Drink; Chocolate Cake a la Mode.

Tuesday: "Plan Your Christmas Budget Early."
